

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs**  
**Wednesday, January 9, 2013**  
**Beginning at 10:00 a.m.**  
**Iowa Gold Star Military Museum**  
**7105 - NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
**Johnston, IA 50313-1824**

**Present:** Col. Todd Jacobus, Chair  
Dan Gannon  
Becky Dirks Haugsted  
Darlene McMartin  
Kate Myers  
Larry Spencer  
Bill Wallace  
Jon Wille  
Mickey Williams

**Staff:** Jodi Tymeson, Executive Director, IDVA  
Mari Mielke, IDVA - Recording Secretary  
Missy Miller, IDVA, Trust Fund Administrator  
Dave Worley, Commandant, IVH  
Michael Hines, Admin. Asst. IVH

**Guests/** Lisa Whitmarsh Peterson, Ft. Des Moines Museum  
**Presenters:** Patty Hamann, Cedar County VSO  
Tracy Keninger, Easter Seals of Iowa  
Lyle Schaffer, American Legion  
Marty Douglas, Purple Heart  
Karen Gooden, Interim VARO Director  
Amy Beller, US Senator Tom Harkin's Office  
Jen Action, Legislative Services Agency  
Mary Neubauer, Iowa Lottery  
Larry Winther, Commander VFW  
Mike Capps II, disabled veteran  
Mitch Holmes, Cass County VSO  
Jerry Hansen, IACCVSO President  
Colin Tadlock, Legislature Rep.  
John Derner, American Legion  
David Thornburg, DAV  
Jerry Yellin, Operation Warrior Wellness  
Mike Kuhn, Marion County VSO  
Terry Rich, Iowa Lottery  
Larry Larson, VFW  
Jerry Bohr, disabled veteran  
Valeria Buckingham, Iowa City, VAMC

**NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE 'UNAPPROVED' UNTIL ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.**

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_

Col. Todd Jacobus, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Date: 3 Apr 2013

**Call to Order:**

Meeting was called to order by Chair Todd Jacobus at 10:01 a.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:**

Before the pledge of allegiance, Chair Jacobus called for attention to listen to a citation of a Medal of Honor recipient, Danny J. Petersen in "This day in history, January 9, 1970." After the reading there was a moment of silence.

**Roll Call:**

Recording secretary took roll call and all Commissioners were present.

**Welcome/Introductions of Guests:**

Chair Jacobus welcomed everyone in attendance and asked guests to introduce themselves.

**Approval of Commission Minutes:**

Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve Commission minutes from September 19, 2012 and was seconded by Commissioner McMartin. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve Trust Fund conference call minutes of October 3, 2012 and was seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Spencer made a motion to approve Trust Fund conference call minutes of November 7, 2012 and was seconded by Commissioner Wallace. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve Trust Fund conference call minutes of December 5, 2012 and was seconded by Commissioner Dirks Haugsted. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

**VA Regional Office Update**

Acting Director Karen Gooden gave an update regarding the new director, Terri Beer coming on board beginning Monday, January 14, 2013. She is currently the Executive Management Officer at the DC center office and over the 57 regional offices, so she has a very good idea of how we do as a field office. So coming on board here at the Des Moines Regional Office, she will be bringing a lot of good information from the headquarters and move the office forward.

We are currently at full staffing and diligently working on claims. We have become one of the additional stations that went into the Veterans Benefits Management System in November, which has been a learning curve because it is a new processing system for all of VBA. It is still being developed as we are processing and we are still one of the stations that are feeding that information to the developers at the central office on anything that might not be working right. This has been challenging, moving the current claims into that system while using this system for developing new claims, while all the time working out the bugs and getting back to the CO for the developers to work out these bugs.

The office is also rolling out Windows 7 in the middle of the process of going paperless and Window 7 doesn't seem to operate very well with our VBA system. So therefore, the office has become somewhat frustrated to work out the efficiencies and keeping on track with backlog claims. This has caused some production delays with all this rolling out all at the same time.

Current total inventory of claims is at 6,889; backlog (over 125 days) is at 4,931. Average day processing is approximately 31-33 claims. Average days' pending is approximately 242.

Commissioner McMartin asked about the county VSO's now having to use the form 527 (7-pages) versus a one page EVR that is now no longer allowed to be submitted when there happens to be a change in income. Discussion continued.

#### **VA Medical Center - Iowa City Update**

Valerie Buckingham gave a brief update regarding new hires and construction progress. Still in the process of interviewing for Chief of Staff position. Eleven new mental health physicians have been hired for the main hospital and community based out-patient clinics. They are also increasing staff from 7 to 11 for the Comp and Pen department and increasing from 2 psychiatric medical doctors to 3. Construction is ongoing.

#### **VA Medical Center - Des Moines Update**

Bart Quick gave a brief update regarding the facility and current construction progress. Bart went on to talk about the proposed 3% growth rate goal at the Des Moines VA Medical Center by working to increase new patients to the facility by 1,000. Will be doing this primarily through our outreach efforts and getting in contact with our returning veterans but also veterans who are out there who are not utilizing our facility for services they have earned.

With that said, along with growth comes growth pains, which is a challenge for us to keep up with the backlog of claims and processing times. Our goal with Comp and Pen claims is to reduce the time to 30 days or less, but are currently at 47.8 days.

Amy Beller from Senator Harkin's office asked why it is taking 2-3 months for new patients to see a primary care physician. Bart said he was not aware that it was the case and would look into this concern and get back to her.

Chairperson Jacobus asked Bart and Valerie if they are looking for one person that represents the mental health community at the Des Moines and Iowa City VA Medical Centers, who are they? With the Veterans Mental Health Task Force, this information would be useful; we need to know who that is. Bart gave the name of Linda Kramer at the Des Moines VAMC.

Valerie indicated that the Iowa City VAMC contact person is Dr. Kathryn Woodman. It would also be appropriate to refer veterans to the OIF/OEF program coordinators at each facility for returning veterans.

#### **Veterans Home Update - David Worley, Commandant**

The last 3 months have been busy and exciting for the Veterans Home. Several activities took place and one notable one was on November 11<sup>th</sup>, Veterans Day, Commissioner Spencer (Vietnam War POW) was their guest speaker and Mr. Worley expressed his appreciation for coming to IVH to speak and how motivating his speech was and how his outlook on life is amazing. Also, on December 1st, IVH celebrated their 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which we have a video commemorating the event that we will be showing at the end of this meeting. One of the interesting history aspects that is not mentioned in the video is about the longest living resident at the Iowa Veterans Home was 65 years. He was admitted in 1930 and he passed away in December 1995.

At the September Commission meeting we talked about some issues we were having with the Department of Inspections and Appeals because of some care issues and some staff not being properly trained. DIA representatives came to IVH on November 26 and spent two days, did their survey and reported no problems.

Mr. Worley gave a brief construction update and talked about how challenging it can be moving residents from one room/building to another.

Beginning with January 1, 2012, IVH started with 601 total residents; 153 admissions, 116 deaths, 27 discharges, and as of December 31, 2012, IVH had a total of 611 total residents. We have 649 full capacity beds, but 12 of those beds are temporarily off-line. There are 113 beds in the domiciliary care and 536 beds in the nursing care.

Mr. Worley discussed the Notice of Intended Action of updating the Administrative Rules coming before the Commission for the purpose of cleaning up the language pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code section 35A.3(2) to amend Chapter 10, in the Iowa Administrative Code since the last revision. Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve the changes that have been outlined in 801document. Seconded by Commissioner Gannon; motion carried; approved unanimously.

After discussion of the recommended Iowa Code 35D changes, Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve recommended code changes to 35D. Commissioner Dirks Haugsted seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

### **IDVA Office Update**

Jodi Tymeson provided the Commission with a written report:

- Cemetery news: the VFW monument was dedicated on Veterans Day, and no activity on the Seabee monument (already approved) as of yet. Interments at the Cemetery as of January 8, 2012 totals 1,402; and over 7,300 applications on file for future interment. Our federal grant pre-application work continues and the Wreaths Across America program was on December 15 and was very well attended.
- State Programs: There is no longer any backlog for the Veterans Trust Fund and the annual report to the Legislature is due January 15, 2013. The report basically summarizes the deposits and the expenditures and shows by category what the Trust Fund moneys help pay. And thanks to our partners with the Lottery, they provided good information showing the lottery tickets sales and how it supports the Trust Fund.
- The Military Home Ownership Program, which is a \$5,000 grant to veterans who qualify for buying a home in Iowa. There has been excellent use of this program – 28 applications just in the month of December.
- The “veteran” designation on driver’s license program will be announced from the DOT on January 15, 2013. The Legislature last year passed this legislation for veterans who want to have the word “veteran” on their driver’s license. IDVA has been working with the DOT, which had a deadline of July 1, 2013, but has accomplished this well in advance so it can be implemented sooner.
- The County Allocation program annual report will be submitted to the Legislature this week. Eighteen counties returned unused funds.
- Legislative update: The Veterans Coalition’s legislative initiatives is part of your handouts and will be handed out at the Veterans Day at the Hill on Wednesday, January 23 with the program beginning at 10:00 a.m. Session convenes on January 14, and we will not have a department bill this year.
- Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> Veterans Day at the Hill will take place at the State Capitol with a short program beginning at 10:00 a.m. Director Tymeson talked about the Veterans Coalition’s Legislative Initiatives that was in each Commissioner’s packet.

### **County Association Update**

Jerry Hansen, President of the County Association gave a brief update: The County Association will be present and at a vendor table for the January 23<sup>rd</sup> Veterans Day at the Hill event. They will be proposing some changes to the Iowa Code section 35.B pertaining to clarification and some language updates. The Association has requested an affiliation with the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC); we feel we can become a stronger organization with this affiliation. The Spring School of Instruction will be held April 9-11 at the Sheraton in West Des Moines.

## **Old Business**

- Jerry Yellin, Operation Warrior Wellness/David Lynch Foundation gave an update about Transcendental Meditation™ that is being used to help veterans with PTSD and to let the Commission know that there are scholarships out there for veterans and their families to learn the stress-reducing TM techniques. They have reduced the \$1500 fee to \$750 for veterans.
- Mike Capps II, a disabled veteran reiterated his position that he first voiced at the Commission meeting last September 19 meeting about the unfairness of how child support calculations in Iowa are not following federal code deduction calculations for disabled veterans. Lengthy discussion continued reflecting his concerns and is asking the Commission to hear what he has to say and see if there is anything the Commission can do to change the way the Iowa court system calculates this deduction to match the federal code system for calculations of child support from disabled veterans. Mr. Capps is asking the Commission to help assist him in working with the Governor's Office, the Judicial Branch, and legislators to get something in Iowa specifically to help disabled veterans in this type of situation.

Commissioner Wallace asked him if he had contacted the Drake Law center as was suggested at the September meeting to see about a pro bono assistance. Mr. Capps said he contacted them twice but never received a response.

- Jerry Bohr had a very lengthy discussion with the Commission to inform them about this same issue and how can they go about, without legal representation, to have the federal code standards are being used in all the states. Some do and some don't and Iowa is one of those states that elect not to follow the federal code on this deduction from

disabled veteran's disability income to pay child support. Discussion continued telling the Commission in great detail about Congressional language of the law is from his documentation. He has contacted the national commander of the VFW and other national veteran's organizations in Washington. Discussion continued for approximately 30 minutes.

## **New Business**

- Presentation by Tracy Keninger with Easter Seals of Iowa, handouts provided and talked about employment opportunities and how Easter Seals of Iowa helps the whole state and not just the local community.
- Presentation by Mary Neubauer with the Iowa Lottery, handouts provided and updated information of new games.
- The Commission determined that Bill Wallace and Kate Myers as subcommittee members to review administrative rules for the Veterans Trust Fund to work with Director Tymeson on suggested changes. Some of the suggested changes include: there is no definition of dependent, no definition of applicant, no definition of under-employment and some inconsistencies regarding liquid assets requirements, etc.
- Chair Jacobus updated the Commission about a meeting held in Des Moines the first of November at the American Legion headquarters with himself, Commissioner Dan Gannon, David Worley, Commandant of the Iowa Veterans Home and Dave Rehbein, Lyle Schaffer and John Derner of the American Legion to talk about some concerns the Legion members have about the Iowa Veterans Home. The meeting went very well and all issues were addressed and discussed in length. The Commission is always open to meeting with any of

the veterans' organizations leadership that has any concerns or issues regarding the veteran community. Discussion continued.

- The IVH video was unable to play with the audio/visual equipment that was used. Will be shown at the April 3<sup>rd</sup> quarterly Commission meeting at the Iowa Veterans Home.

**Determine next Commission meeting**

The next quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown in the Mallory Leisure Center. The July quarterly meeting will be on July 10<sup>th</sup> at the Gold Star Military Museum and the September quarterly meeting will be held on September 18<sup>th</sup> at the Iowa Veterans Home.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

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**Mari Mielke**

**Recording Secretary**

**Cc:** Jeffrey Boeyink, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office  
Ted Stopulos, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office  
Sandra Hurtado-Peters, Dept. of Management  
Barbara Galloway, Attorney General's Office  
Jennifer Acton, Legislative Fiscal Agency  
Jenny Lawrence, Auditor's Office  
Steve Ainger, Dept. of Administrative Services  
Jill Joseph, Outreach Coordinator, IDVA  
David Worley, Commandant, IVH  
Mike Hines, Administrative Assistant, IVH  
Senator Daryl Beall, Senate VA Committee, Chair  
Senator Jeff Danielson, Senate VA Committee, VC  
Senator Ken Rozenboom, Senate VA Comm. RM  
Rep. Dwayne Alons, House VA Committee, Chair  
Rep. Sandy Salmon, House VA Committee, VC  
Rep. Jerry Kearns, House VA Committee, RM  
Colin Tadlock, House Republican Research Staff  
Zeke Furlong, House Democratic Research Staff  
Tom Ashworth, Senate Republican Caucus Staff  
Julie Simon, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff  
Jerry Hansen, President, IACCVSO  
Terri Beer, Director, VA Regional Office  
Barry Sharp, Director, VAMC, Iowa City  
Don Cooper, Director, VAMC, Des Moines  
Lyle Schaffer, Commander, American Legion  
John Derner, Adjutant, American Legion  
Larry Winther, Commander, VFW  
Jon Schneider, President, PVA  
Dale Purdy, Commander, AMVETS  
David Thornburg, Commander, DAV  
Allan Packer, Commander, Ex-Prisoners of War  
William Gansemer, Commander, MCL  
Paul Pickard, Commander, MOPH  
Ray Hutchison, Commander, VVA